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SUBJECT: AN ARRAY OF CIVIL SOCIETY EVENTS AROUND THE G8  
SUMMIT

REF: MOSCOW 5998

Classified By: Ambassador William J. Burns. Reasons: 1.4 (B/D).

11. (C) SUMMARY: The menu of civil society events around the G8 Summit has taken shape, although a few uncertainties remain. The main GOR-sponsored event, the so-called Civil G8 to be held on July 3-4, has been supplemented with a human rights roundtable, which some independent activists view as a helpful Kremlin concession. Nonetheless, activists are organizing a July 5 conference focused directly on human rights to further supplement the Civil G8. The main independent civil society event will be the "Another Russia" forum on July 11-12, for which organizers have high hopes but about which some activists continue to harbor reservations. Plans for a meeting of global NGO leaders seem to have gone by the wayside, while the GOR agreed to allow what it describes as an "anti-globalist event" at a St. Petersburg stadium in an apparent effort to control potential protesters. Plans are proceeding for a religious summit in Moscow on July 4-5. Differences linger among independent activists but many seem at least fairly satisfied that the events surrounding the Summit will give them sufficient opportunity to air their views. END SUMMARY.

SUPPLEMENTING THE CIVIL G8 ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS FRONT  
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12. (C) Although Presidential Council for Civil Society Institutions and Human Rights Chair Ella Pamfilova told the DCM that pulling together all elements of the Civil G8, the premier GOR-sponsored event surrounding the Summit (reftel), is a daunting task, plans for that event are proceeding well. The Civil G8 is to take place July 3-4 in Moscow, and President Putin is expected to speak, perhaps at its closing session. Organizers had originally planned to focus the proceedings primarily on the main Summit agenda items, and those remain high on the agenda, which includes roundtables on education, energy security, health issues and global economic issues, among others. As Pamfilova had been hinting to us lately, however, human rights have now become a formal agenda item, with one of the conference's eight working groups to focus on that issue.

13. (C) The Civil G8's human rights roundtable, formally to discuss subjects such as "Restrictions on and Undermining of Human Rights under the Flag of the War Against Terror, Including Armed Conflict Situations," is to include a range of international issues, ranging from Afghanistan and Iraq to Northern Ireland and Turkey, with Israel/Palestine also likely to be addressed. Russia/Chechnya is also on that agenda, however, and the roundtable includes a number of independent Russian activists, including Memorial's Oleg Orlov and Grigoriy Shvedov, Center for Extreme Journalism's Oleg Panfilov and Human Rights Watch's Aleksandr Petrov. Demos Center's Tatyana Lokshina, who will also participate, told us June 27 that she was hopeful the roundtable would

provide a useful forum to highlight human rights causes, and felt it important that independent activists take part to demonstrate that they seek to play a constructive role rather than an exclusively oppositionist one. Others, however, remain convinced the event will only serve to legitimize Putin administration human rights policies while skirting over Russia's human rights problems.

14. (SBU) Despite her hopefulness about the Civil G8, Lokshina is among a large group of activists who opted to organize an additional conference, on "Human Rights in Russia in the Year of Russia's Chairmanship of the G8 and Council of Europe," to be held in Moscow on July 5. Such plans resulted because of fears that, although Chechnya is on the Civil G8 human rights roundtable's agenda, it will not receive sufficient attention given the range of other international issues. The organizers also envision the July 5 event as a bridge between the Civil G8 and the "Another Russia" Forum, to be held about a week later. The July 5 conference is to focus on issues such as abuse of Russia's legal system, limiting of personal and political freedoms, treatment of minorities, and international cooperation on promoting human rights in Russia.

"ANOTHER RUSSIA" TAKES CLEARER SHAPE  
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15. (C) United Civil Front head Garri Kasparov told us June 27 that he was pleased with the progress in organizing the "Another Russia" forum, to be held in Moscow on July 11-12. The forum is to have sessions devoted to civil rights, "internal war," violence over society and nature, and relations between the state and society. Kasparov was enthused at the high level of planned USG participation, and anticipated that a high-ranking Canadian legislator would

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attend as well. Expressing disappointment that Western European governments had reacted coolly to the organizers' invitations to send official participants, he remained hopeful for more positive news from the Europeans. On the afternoon of June 27, Interfax reported that the event would be sponsored by the National Endowment for Democracy and George Soros' Open Society Institute.

16. (C) Kasparov listed a host of Russia's leading opposition politicians as likely to attend, ranging from Duma Deputy Vladimir Ryzhkov and Union of Right Forces head Nikita Belykh to Rodina's Mikhail Delyagin. He doubted that Yabloko head Grigoriy Yavlinskiy would take part, and said the organizers were leaning toward asking former Rodina leader Dmitriy Rogozin not to attend. Kasparov also said it was uncertain if the Communist Party of the Russian Federation would send an official delegation, although many Communist members were sure to come. In sum, Kasparov said that his hopes to bring together opposition politicians from across the political spectrum would be largely fulfilled.

17. (C) We continue to hear grumbling from some independent activists who remain concerned that the event is overly political, and that this could end up hurting the broader civil society community. Lokshina told us she intended to steer clear of the event for that reason, and Shvedov said he had refused an invitation to speak at it. Anti-Defamation League Moscow office chief Aleksandr Akselrod made the same point, telling us on June 27 that an overly politicized event might hinder his office's work on tolerance and that the presence of Rodina people, among others, also caused him concern.

18. (SBU) National Democratic Institute Russia Chief of Party Mary O'Hagan told us that in addition to attending, she was organizing training sessions for some participants, in order to take advantage of their presence in Moscow for the forum. The sessions, to be held both before and after the forum, would focus on NDI Russia's research and analysis of public attitudes toward politics, as well as discussion of how those

attitudes affected political activism in Russia.

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THE FATE OF OTHER OPPOSITION EVENTS  
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¶9. (C) The World Wildlife Fund (WWF), in conjunction with other organizations, had hoped to hold a meeting of the heads of some thirty top international NGOs on the margins of the Summit. WWF Russia head Igor Chestin told us June 26 that such an event was unlikely to take place because the GOR strongly opposed it. We understand from our British contacts that plans are in the works for UK PM Blair's spouse to meet with some international NGO leaders, possibly from WWF and Human Rights Watch, on the margins of the Summit, with former British politician Paddy Ashdown also in attendance. Our British interlocutors stressed that the British First Lady would attend only in an informal capacity, as a human rights activist, rather than in any formal role.

¶10. (C) In a surprise move, the GOR approved the plans of For Human Rights NGO head Lev Ponomarev to hold a "Russian Social Forum 2006" in St. Petersburg on July 14-15. The event is to draw together those who describe themselves as taking an uncompromising stance toward the Putin administration and who refuse to take part in other of the Summit-related civil society activities. Ponomarev, who had previously held out little hope of getting GOR approval for his Social Forum, told us June 27 that he was amazed at the decision, which he only came to believe when he heard St. Petersburg Governor Valentina Matviyenko announce it publicly. Matviyenko described it as the "anti-globalist event," Ponomarev told us wryly, and he speculated that the GOR had approved it to better control potentially disruptive elements, who could be kept contained at the Kirov Stadium in St. Petersburg where the Forum is to take place.

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RELIGIOUS SUMMIT MOVES AHEAD  
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¶11. (C) In addition to the civil society activities, plans are in the works for other events. Most prominent among these is a World Summit of Religious Leaders, to be convened by Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) Patriarch Aleksey II and held in Moscow on July 3-5. President Putin reportedly will address the conference. Over one hundred representatives of Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Taoism and Hinduism will attend, and will draw up a statement to present to the G8 heads of state. Neither the Pope nor the Dalai Lama were invited. Four cardinals are expected, including Cardinal McCarrick of Washington, D.C. Rabbi Arthur Schneier is also among those coming from the U.S. Christian Orthodoxy's four

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Apostolic Patriarchies (Alexandria, Antioch, Constantinople and Jerusalem) will send low level representatives because they see the event as a public relations exercise designed to promote the ROC's claim to leadership of world Orthodoxy, according to resident Bishop of Antioch Niphon. While the Russian organizers had hoped the Archbishop of Canterbury would attend, our UK Embassy interlocutor told us that was not likely. Protestant Bishop Sergey Ryakhovskiy, head of the Russian Union of Christians of Evangelical Faith, told us June 27 that by all indications, participation among leading U.S. Protestant figures would be disappointing.

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COMMENT  
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¶12. (C) Differences continue to linger within the independent civil society community about how to proceed, notably whether to take part in the Civil G8 and the "Another Russia" forum. Our general sense, though, is that many activists would acknowledge that the range of events surrounding the Summit offer at least a reasonable opportunity to express their views. Much will now depend on whether the activists emerge having reinforced their image as a divided camp or as a

vibrant and positive force.  
BURNS